United Nations A/C.2/54/SR.12

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
2 March 2000
English
Original: Spanish

Second Committee

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 October 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Matute (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Peru)

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In the absence of Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Matute (Peru), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 105: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) *(continued)* (A/54/98 and A/54/316)

1. **Mr. Ierulescu** (Romania), after associating his delegation with the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries, said that the eradication of poverty was one of the central goals of the United Nations and its agencies. Although the situation in that regard had improved during the past five decades, the expected results had not been achieved. The recent economic slowdown in many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, especially as a result of the financial crises of the past two years, had made it less likely that the international commitments made at the United Nations global conferences and the specific targets of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty would be met. A world economy that was growing at an annual rate of 2 per cent could not provide sufficient resources to achieve the objective of reducing by half the number of people living in absolute poverty by 2015.

2. The United Nations remained the only international organization with a broad system of operational activities devoted to poverty eradication. Ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions would assist in the search for effective means of achieving that objective. That cooperation, together with national governments' recognition of their own responsibility and the involvement of civil society, would be a key factor in the success of poverty eradication programmes at the global and national levels. He welcomed the Cologne debt initiative, which would provide deeper debt relief within the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, and the decision taken in Washington to enhance the latter Initiative.

3. In its complex transition to an effective market economy, Romania was also facing poverty eradication problems. However, his Government was confident that with the support of civil society and the assistance of the United Nations specialized agencies, its efforts would lead to sustainable human development and improve the basic standard of living of its population. In that regard, he praised the work done in Romania by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in supporting State reform and promoting social stability. He also stressed the importance of the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) for Romania, which would soon be established with the support of the World Bank.

4. International cooperation at all levels, bilateral, regional and global, was crucial in achieving the goals of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. His Government supported the proposal that the Millennium Assembly should focus on poverty eradication in the context of globalization and hoped that the debate on that topic in 2000 would complement the work and efforts of the international community.

5. **Mr. Kebede** (Ethiopia) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Despite the countless programmes and campaigns waged at the national and international levels, poverty remained a major impediment to human development and economic progress. Half of the world's 6 billion people were still mired in poverty, trying to eke out a living on US$ 2 per day, and there was a continued disproportionate distribution of global income. The depth of poverty was greater in Africa than in any other region. A study undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), had estimated that poverty affected 60 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa and 27 per cent of that of the North African subregion.

6. With respect to the goal of halving poverty by 2015, African countries would need to achieve a per capita growth rate of 5.2 per cent in order to reduce poverty by 4 per cent per year. In the case of the region of sub-Saharan Africa, that would require an average annual population growth rate of no more than 2.8 per cent and an economic growth rate of 8 per cent. The corresponding figure for Africa as a whole would be 7 per cent, primarily because the incidence of poverty was lower in North Africa. That would be a Herculean task requiring the mobilization of a huge amount of external resources and an effective partnership between African countries and the international community.

7. Although African Governments were responsible for eradicating poverty in their respective countries, achievement of the agreed objectives required a genuine global partnership to in support of national efforts. The international community must take drastic measures to address the debt crisis which had been crippling the economic growth of African countries and draining scarce resources from health, education and other services for two decades. It was also necessary to create an enabling international environment so that those countries could integrate into the world economy. Similarly, official development assistance (ODA) must be greatly increased in order to reduce the vulnerability of, and the emerging inequalities between, States and to fulfil the international commitments made at the various global conferences on poverty reduction.

8. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia had expressed its commitment to poverty eradication in many ways. The State's long-term development policy gave priority to the development of small-scale agriculture, which was the major source of livelihood for the majority of the poor. That strategy also envisaged the use of labour-intensive technologies and the expansion of social services. On the basis of that general policy framework, a number of sectoral policies in the areas of population, health, education, the advancement of women and social services had been adopted with the common goal of poverty eradication. His Government believed that those favourable internal conditions would evoke a positive response from its development partners, allowing it to intensify the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment in Ethiopia.

9. **Mr. Egou-Engwau** (Uganda), associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the struggle against poverty was a key priority for Uganda. Having carefully studied the nature of the problem and the way in which it must be tackled, his Government had recognized the need to define the role of the various players — public sector, civil society and Government — in that task. It had also concluded that it was necessary to review the economic and social policies inherited from the past, which emphasized production based on a few export-processing industries, and to establish a production structure that would help to improve the standard of living of the population. His delegation therefore agreed with the statement in the report of the Secretary-General that poverty eradication goals must reflect the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, which encompassed not only lack of income but more qualitative aspects of life.

10. In developing a national poverty eradication strategy, the Government had recognized that that strategy should be based on an accurate definition of poverty, its consequences and its historical and geographic trends. It was clear from the economic and human development indicators that poverty was much more marked in rural areas. The poorest communities depended on subsistence agriculture and assistance from the extended family and, in many cases, lacked social services and productive opportunities. To a large extent, poor households were headed by older, young or widowed persons. The situation of poverty in the country was aggravated by the high incidence of disability and diseases, particularly human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and malaria, and by the instability along the country's northern border.

11. The Ugandan Poverty Eradication Plan focused on the promotion of economic growth, the improvement of income distribution and the provision of basic economic and social services. It recognized as a prerequisite the need to promote political and macroeconomic stability and microeconomic incentives with particular emphasis on good governance, liberalization and privatization. The Plan involved catalytic action in key sectors, such as agriculture and the informal sector, which benefited the poor. It also called for the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, especially women; improvement of the physical infrastructure in order to facilitate market access; achievement of adequate levels of health and education and, in particular, implementation of a universal primary education programme; and establishment of a poverty-monitoring system. The Government also recognized the important contribution that the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other community-based organizations could make to the struggle against poverty. Despite its difficult economic situation and lack of resources, Uganda was devoting as many as possible of its resources to implementation of the Plan of Action.

12. Despite the international community's efforts to assist developing countries in the context of the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), it did not seem

possible to achieve the goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. It was essential that commitments should be translated into action in order to ensure the full implementation of the programme of the Decade. In that regard, he welcomed the establishment of a link between debt relief and poverty eradication and urged that similar measures should be taken to improve the external economic environment for the development of developing countries, especially with respect to market access for their exports, which would have a direct impact on the livelihood of their people.

13. **Mr. Al-Muntasser** (Yemen) said that on the eve of the third millennium, it might be wondered what had been achieved in the area of poverty eradication, which was one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The statistics contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/54/1) showed that that objective was far from achieved. The assistance provided by donor countries and international organizations remained well below the targets established to ensure that societies could emerge from poverty and to prevent that situation from having an adverse impact on social stability and security. Poor societies could be neither productive nor stable unless they were guaranteed decent living conditions and a minimum level of food security.

14. The Republic of Yemen was devoting significant resources to its development plans. Since 1995, it had implemented an economic and administrative reform programme that had succeeded in reducing the budget deficit and stabilizing the currency market. However, the negative consequences of the reform had had a direct impact on the living conditions of the nation's people, particularly the poor. In cooperation with international organizations, the Government had taken a series of compensatory measures designed to reduce the high cost of living, increase job opportunities, broaden the participation of young people and women, promote economic and social development and strengthen social security. In 1998, it had also established a social protection fund that provided cash assistance. The Government was implementing five major programmes to combat poverty through public works projects, the promotion of small-scale industry, a social development fund, a job training fund and a national family assistance programme.

15. The shortage of jobs in Yemen and the decline in employment opportunities for Yemenites in neighbouring States had caused the population increased suffering and had had an impact on development plans, which must also take into account problems resulting from demographic growth. The increased assistance provided by United Nations programmes was a provisional means of poverty alleviation, but there was a need for comprehensive development programmes implemented with the balanced, complementary involvement of developed, developing and least developed countries.

16. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines) commended the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/54/316) noting that significant progress could be made in eliminating that scourge if countries incorporated the recommendations contained in the report into definitive, viable plans of action. It was surprising that according to the 1998 UNDP poverty report, only 35 countries had set poverty eradication goals.

17. However, the affected countries themselves had the primary responsibility for poverty eradication. His Government was doing its best to reduce the incidence of poverty in accordance with the targets that had been set. Although the Asian financial crisis had resulted in a temporary setback, his Government hoped that the ongoing economic recovery would make it possible to sustain implementation of its Social Reform Agenda, which provided a framework for its poverty eradication policy and was an integral part of its National Development Plan.

18. It was also important for the international community to support national efforts in that area, whether through bilateral or multilateral channels, and for ODA targets to be met, since ODA was essential in addressing the priorities established at recent international conferences. In addition, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the creation of an enabling economic environment was crucial to the success of measures taken at the national level. Future trade negotiations must provide substantial benefit to developing countries by improving the latter's market access and reducing trade barriers. There was also a need for a new international financial architecture able to address the systematic weaknesses of the global financial system.

19. While welcoming the many activities carried out by the United Nations system within the framework of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, his delegation hoped that those efforts would become more coherent in the system's response to requests for assistance at the national level. He was encouraged by the changes that had taken place within the Organization as a result of the triennial policy review and the Secretary-General's reform process, which had made it possible to establish a single United Nations presence at the country level. However, there was a need for further clarification of several aspects, particularly the operational linkages between the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the country development framework (CDF) formulated by the World Bank.

20. Following the recent decisions taken by the Development Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries would be linked more closely to poverty reduction programmes through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers for the States in question. Consequently, the respective roles of other United Nations agencies in national programmes must be clarified in order to ensure coordinated support for the enhanced HIPC Initiative, to ensure that the strategy papers were demand-driven and establish national ownership of the programme.

21. **Mr. Iddi** (United Republic of Tanzania) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Poverty was the single greatest scourge currently facing society, although the world had the resources and the capacity to eliminate it. Poverty had been associated with globalization, which entailed both benefits and huge risks. In developing countries, poverty was perpetuated by the external debt, the lack of resources from ODA and foreign direct investment, (FDI), low commodity prices and economic marginalization. Without the full, effective participation of States in global economic growth, the target of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015 could not be attained. The international community should contribute effectively to the economic development of the developing countries in order to create an enabling environment that would give everyone access to basic services and allow them to participate effectively in society.

22. To that end, the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as mothers and children must be met and domestic resources must be mobilized for, *inter alia*, the establishment of microcredit facilities. Above all, there must be a call for increased ODA. The developing countries required assistance that would enhance their ownership of the development process, generate self-reliance and assist in the development of an environment conducive to private sector investment by improving the infrastructure and public services.

23. The external debt burden must also be addressed so that funds could be made available for other productive activities. His Government was aware of its responsibility to provide better services to its citizens and to free them from poverty. However, national efforts alone could not bring about the desired results; the assistance of the United Nations and the international community was required.

24. **Mr. Owade** (Kenya) fully associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. His Government recognized that the challenges for sustainable development were poverty eradication and the achievement of sustained economic growth. An estimated 45 per cent of the Kenyan population was living below the poverty line, a situation that threatened the fabric of society. In June 1999, his Government had launched a National Poverty Eradication Plan that included measures designed to increase household incomes and to improve the quality of life for the poor in accordance with the goals and commitments of the World Summit for Social Development.

25. His Government had established 16 demonstration projects and programmes on social and economic infrastructure in various parts of the country. The experience gained from those projects would be replicated nationwide and would be consolidated in the Government's policies and programmes. Poverty alleviation accounted for 7.5 per cent of public spending, and at least 10 per cent of the budget would be set aside for poverty eradication during the first three-year budget cycle. Various organizations, including United Nations agencies, had been approached as potential partners in those endeavours since government resources alone were insufficient for implementation of those projects.

26. A Poverty Eradication Commission had been established to oversee initiatives in that area; its members included stakeholders from the private sector, academia, trade unions and non-governmental organizations. Since most of the public sector activities would be implemented through sectoral ministries or departments, a modality was being worked out to enable the Commission to monitor the use of public funds allocated to poverty reduction. His Government wished to thank UNDP, the African Development Bank and other bodies for their support of the Commission.

27. It was important to stress that Kenya and other developing countries had endorsed the poverty eradication targets established at the World Summit for Social Development and other United Nations conferences and, in particular, the goal of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015. Those goals and objectives reflected the multidimensional nature of poverty, which encompassed not only lack of income, but more qualitative aspects of life. His delegation called on the international community, including the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, to provide new and additional resources for the eradication of poverty in the developing countries, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa. To that end, a genuine partnership must be established at the bilateral and multilateral levels; however, such a partnership could be meaningful only if there were sufficient political will to address meaningfully the question of ODA. Greater efforts must also be made to increase FDA and remove barriers to international trade and technology transfer. While the Cologne debt initiative was a welcome step towards that goal, it must be accompanied by realistic, genuine debt relief measures such as the conversion into grants of any remaining official bilateral and multilateral debt. Furthermore, debt relief measures should be directed towards the implementation of viable, priority development projects and programmes designed to address social and economic poverty eradication needs in the rural and urban areas of developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

28. **Mr. Le Hoai Trung** (Viet Nam) said that although, on average, the living conditions of the world's population had improved considerably in recent decades, billions of people were still living in poverty without access to basic services. It was his delegation's view that in order to achieve results in poverty alleviation, national efforts must be accompanied by international cooperation and assistance. He was pleased to note that according to the report of the Secretary-General on that topic, there had been a marked increase in the contribution of the United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies to those activities.

29. Poverty eradication had been and remained one of his Government's highest priorities. In 1946, after the nation had regained its independence, the then President Ho Chi Minh had declared hunger and illiteracy two "enemies" that must be dealt with as resolutely as foreign aggressors. The Vietnamese people fully realized the seriousness of that challenge; in 1945 alone, when Viet Nam was still a colony, 2 million Vietnamese had died of hunger. Since 1986, the year in which the economic reform process had begun, the issue of poverty eradication had been part of the overall strategy for social and economic development, which included specific objectives for the periods ending in 2010, 2020 and 2050. He reiterated his delegation's support for the 20/20 Initiative, which had been reaffirmed at the second international meeting on that initiative, held in Hanoi in 1998. He also thanked the various countries, the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, the international financial institutions and the international non-governmental organizations that had provided effective assistance and urged them to continue to do so.

30. Poverty eradication required a multidimensional, integrated development approach that would also include the promotion of economic growth and access to basic social services. Since most poor people lived in developing countries, his delegation reiterated that although the key to success lay in the efforts of each country, there was a need for a favourable external environment consisting of equitable international economic, financial and trading systems, relief of the debt burden and enhanced forms of cooperation and assistance for developing countries. His delegation joined other countries in calling for a reversal of the downward trend in ODA.

31. **Ms. Oh Young-ju** (Republic of Korea), welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on the subject under consideration, noted that despite the consensus on the importance of poverty eradication, the number of people who suffered from it remained very high and was rising. Poverty could be eradicated if specific conditions were put into place at the national

and global levels. First, the principles of good governance must be strengthened since an efficient administrative structure and a sound, independent legal system were essential to the effective implementation of social development programmes. It was equally important to tackle the problem of corruption, particularly pervasive low-level corruption, and lack of access to legal recourse and protection. Second, it was essential to formulate and implement appropriate public policy. Macroeconomic policies aimed at qualitative and quantitative economic growth must be balanced by social policies to protect the most vulnerable groups. Third, the poor, especially women, must be empowered and given the means and tools — through adequate investment and education and health programmes — with which to emerge from poverty.

32. Although national measures must be the first to be adopted, they were not sufficient to surmount the challenges of poverty and the international community should assist developing countries in that task. Such cooperation could range from direct assistance through increased ODA to the forging of a new global environment that would enable developing countries to integrate successfully into the global economy. In developing a global trade and financial system, it was essential to address the needs of those countries in their pursuit of poverty eradication. It was also important to establish an active partnership among all parties concerned, including governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society. However, in order to obtain optimal results, coordination of efforts at the national and global level must be continuously pursued. The conditions she had mentioned were all key factors in the effort to eradicate poverty; however, the greatest difficulty lay in coordinating structural and policy issues with partnership issues.

33. **Mr. Tarar** (Pakistan) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was distressing that nearly all the objectives established for poverty eradication remained out of reach, a fact which called into question the effectiveness of the approach taken in combating poverty. In a globalizing world, efforts to find piecemeal solutions were bound to fail. It was necessary to take a holistic approach; poverty eradication should be part of the overall goal of development since national macroeconomic policies to benefit the poor could work only when supported by policies to promote development at the international level.

34. The East Asian crisis had made it clear that external shocks could shake the foundations of economies. His delegation therefore endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraph 45 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/316), which dealt with the international community's role in creating an enabling international environment, providing new and additional resources and mobilizing science and technology to address the problems of developing countries.

35. There was currently an increased emphasis on the role of the private sector in poverty eradication. However, although noble intentions and efforts to raise funds to help the poor were laudable, charity alone could not eradicate poverty. Those energies should be devoted to promoting development by lending support to national efforts to create an enabling international economic environment.

36. The report of the Secretary-General made it clear that women suffered more from poverty than did men; that issue had been widely recognized in the developing countries. His Government had launched special initiatives to generate employment opportunities for women by providing them with loans and training in order to promote the establishment of small independent enterprises. Pakistan's Social Action Programme focused on eradicating the causes of poverty in the overall context of the promotion of economic and social development.

37. Referring to paragraphs 53 and 54 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/316), which contained interesting observations concerning a human rights-based approach to poverty eradication, he said that the exercise of the right to benefit from economic opportunities and social services should be seen in the larger context of the exercise of the right to development. The goal of development should be promoted through sustained economic growth, reform of the financial architecture, increased financial flows for development, coherence in global economic policy-making, a comprehensive, durable solution of the external debt problems, increased market access and improved terms of trade.

38. **Mr. Adhikari** (Nepal) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77

and China. The poverty in which the people of developing countries lived was not only an economic or social problem; it had become a humanitarian problem as well and was complicated by lack of or limited access to resources, inadequate physical infrastructure, unemployment, environmental degradation and low income. At the same time, gender disparities and poor institutional capabilities had made the task of poverty eradication more difficult.

39. It was time for the international community to recognize that the huge and ever-growing number of poor people in the developing countries should be a priority concern. Starvation, diseases and persistent illiteracy were clear signs of the imbalance between economic development and population growth in those countries. It was natural that for the poor people of developing countries, the meaning of human rights was limited to meeting their food, clothing, education and health care needs. Since the developing countries could not provide the resources required, donor countries and agencies should fulfil the commitments made at the various international forums, particularly with regard to foreign direct investments in the least developed countries and to ODA.

40. As part of a general effort to eradicate poverty, Nepal was working within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to reduce poverty in that region. At the national level, poverty eradication was the official objective of the ninth five-year plan, which included decentralization, agricultural development and integrated agroforestry development. The long-term objective was to reduce Nepal's absolute poverty rate from 42 per cent to 10 per cent over a 20-year period. By implementing special programmes, his Government hoped to achieve a higher rate of economic development while maintaining a population growth rate of 1.5 per cent.

41. His Government's efforts to eradicate poverty had been complicated by the nation's topography and weather conditions and by a lack of technical knowledge and advanced technology needed to manage natural disasters and implement rehabilitation programmes. In addition, the fact that the population was scattered over remote locations had made the delivery of services considerably more expensive. The international community should recognize the efforts of poor countries and, in particular, of least developed countries such as Nepal, to break the cycle of poverty. In an era of globalization and liberalization that threatened to further marginalize the poor, his Government welcomed the Cologne debt initiative for heavily indebted poor countries and believed that it should be extended to all least developed countries. In that regard, he also noted with appreciation the measures taken by the Bretton Woods institutions in transforming the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) into a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF).

42. Development cooperation in the twentieth century had made it possible to determine the basic problems of low-income countries; however, the 20/20 Initiative of developing countries and their partners had not yet gained the momentum required for genuine poverty eradication. His Government, which had endeavoured to allocate nearly 20 per cent of the national budget to the sectors of health, education, drinking water and other basic social services, believed that developing countries should take the primary responsibility for expanding such services within their territories but that donor countries still had an important role to play in that regard, primarily by fulfilling their ODA commitments.

43. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that given its extent and complexity — half the world's population was affected — poverty was a scourge that threatened international peace, security and stability; the entire international community must take action to combat it.

44. The commitments made at international conferences provided the United Nations system with a solid basis for redoubling its efforts to eradicate poverty. In that regard, he welcomed the holding in 2000 of a special session of the General Assembly on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, which would provide an opportunity to consider the progress achieved in poverty eradication from the point of view of international cooperation.

45. It was well known that in order to solve the problem of poverty, its fundamental causes must be eliminated through programmes aimed at promoting economic growth and sustainable development. It was necessary to create an international economic environment that would facilitate the integration of countries of the South into the global economy. His

Government had endeavoured to adapt to the new requirements of globalization through economic liberalization and integration into the international environment and had paid due attention to social development in order to guarantee progress in all sectors, preserve the cohesiveness of society and prevent social fragmentation and marginalization. Its determination had been demonstrated by the allocation of significant budgetary resources, the promotion of regional development, an increase in the purchasing power of wages and increased attention to low-income and vulnerable groups. It was important to stress the importance that his Government attributed to social development in the broadest sense of the word, which implied the interrelatedness of social and economic factors and a focus on vulnerable groups in order to facilitate their economic and social integration.

46. Efforts made in that area had reduced the poverty rate from 25 per cent in 1978 to 6 per cent in 1998, increased life expectancy to 72 years, substantially improved per capita income and resulted in a demographic growth rate similar to that of the most advanced countries and a greater focus on increasing the number of job opportunities. Those tasks had been facilitated by the establishment in 1993 of a National Solidarity Fund, which was financed through voluntary contributions from citizens and private enterprise in order to strengthen the basic infrastructure and create new sources of income in isolated rural areas. Furthermore, the establishment of a National Solidarity Bank, a mechanism that provided opportunities for economic integration by promoting microcredit, was a sign of his Government's emphasis on promoting national solidarity, private enterprise and mutual assistance between social groups.

47. His delegation reiterated the Tunisian Head of State's appeal for the establishment of a global solidarity fund, financed through donations and voluntary contributions, as a means of combating poverty and promoting development in the poorest regions of the world. Poverty eradication was not only a political priority, but also a sacred duty that all countries must perform for the sake of the dignity of all nations, whether rich or poor.

48. **Mr. Maruyama** (Japan) said that the old problem of poverty eradication remained the top priority of the international community and the Japanese Government. More specifically, the objective set by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) — reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 — was also the goal of Japan's development assistance programme. It was necessary to adopt an output-oriented approach with clear goals and measurable indicators, and there must be constant feedback to ensure that the outcome influenced the formulation of new development policies and activities. A cooperative approach should be adopted, making the most of the comparative advantages of each organization. The advantage of the United Nations system was its neutrality, impartiality and universality and the fact that it operated in a wide range of areas. Therefore, the United Nations agencies should cooperate with each other and with other development partners and should continue to raise the international community's awareness of the importance of eradicating poverty. All development actors, including the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system and, in particular, the private sector, should be involved in poverty eradication in order to make the best use of the limited resources available. The developing countries, for their part, should integrate poverty reduction measures into all their development policies and elaborate strategies with time-bound, clear goals; the international community should support such efforts.

49. It was evident that Africa continued to require special attention. If Africa was to achieve the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015, annual GDP must increase by at least 7 per cent, which was far higher than the growth rates achieved by many African countries. The Tokyo Agenda for Action, adopted at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), encouraged African countries to take initiatives for their own development and called for strengthened cooperation between Africa, the developed countries and the international organizations. In follow-up to that Conference, his Government, in cooperation with the Government of Kenya, had held a high-level debt management seminar in Nairobi and, in cooperation with the Government of Malaysia, was scheduled to hold an Africa-Asia Business Forum in Kuala Lumpur in order to promote trade and investment between those two continents.

50. Poverty was a complex phenomenon that was linked to environmental deterioration, conflict, the lack of basic education and safe water, and natural disasters and was further complicated by the globalization of the

economy. His Government hoped that the United Nations system would continue its efforts to eradicate poverty throughout the world and that it would initiate further activities to that end.

51. **Mr. Aujali** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Poverty eradication required a solid economic foundation, and the unfavourable economic situation was hindering progress in the developing countries. The problem was a serious one and could not be solved without joint efforts. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action affirmed that extreme poverty and social exclusion constituted a violation of human dignity and called for the taking of steps to put an end thereto. It must be remembered that human beings were the first priority and that people from the poorest, most vulnerable groups must be involved in the decision-making process. Development was the result of a combination of favourable social and human factors.

52. Developing countries had endeavoured to emulate the type of progress achieved by societies of the North and had realized that they could not do so without first taking a comprehensive approach to human development. In order to bring about satisfactory political, social and cultural integration, it was necessary to meet the needs of vulnerable groups in difficult circumstances such as women, children, the poor, displaced persons and refugees. Unless the needs of those groups were met, they could become alienated, and that could lead to social violence. The international community must meet its commitments, particularly those made to the least developed countries, in order to guarantee human development, including providing health care and education at no cost, making vocational training available and creating job and income-generating opportunities. The suffering of marginalized people was aggravated by poverty. Young people with no access to employment, women suffering from various forms of discrimination and marginalization, children, the sick and older persons had an enormous human potential that should be realized.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.